Mikaela Gay

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Queen’s Garden

Personal Prologue

I grew up in a place where the stars shined bright in the nightsky. Beside cool caves and mini roller coasters that wrapped around the city for days. My name is Mikaela Gay. Mikaela Aurielle Gay. I am African American. I get Black from both my parents. I grew up in a neighborhood surrounded by Cascade, Campbellton, Adamsville, and MLK all considered the 404 in what was considered the SWATS, the southwest side of Atlanta, Zone 4. Everybody grew up believing that the Southwest side was the best side Atlanta had to offer. Most of us didn’t know any better. We spent hours and hours in front of the Candy Lady, Ms. Strawberries house. She had snacks lined up like a treasured gold mine and a basketball goal that attracted both genders. She kept the jump ropes, balls, and chalk in her garage and collected the toys once the street lights cut on. It wasn’t until I was older that I realized the stars where really overhead lights from different buildings and offices, the caves were highway underpasses and all those roller coasters were highways connected to biways that ALWAYS came with hours of traffic. Now Ms. Strawberry is a mean old lady that rarely comes out of her home. No one is playing outside for fear of being hit by the pimped out cars racing down the street and that basketball goal is strayed with graffiti and bullet holes. I understand that there was waayyy more to the world that the Southwest side, but it’s still nice to reminisce of the good ole days. Times when life was much easier, simpler, and the neighborhood seemed picture perfect…